

# Conservation Challenges

*Norsultan Nazarbaev, President of Kazakstan, presents King Juan Carlos of Spain with a snow leopard coat*

The snow leopard range spans 12 countries, including four republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The 'Stans have high inflation, widespread poverty and little or no funding for wildlife management. Three critical gaps to snow leopard conservation are: 1) Information - outdated knowledge of snow leopard status and distribution, along with the nature of illegal fur and bone trade; 2) Enforcement - weak laws and fines pose no credible deterrent to poaching, especially in the face of a struggling economy; 3) Awareness - in the experience of some locals, a dead snow leopard is worth more than a live one, while others see the skin as an important cultural symbol.

There are in Kyrgyzstan. ISLT learned that four troubling re-snow leopards were recently killed parts of both by poachers in Kyrgyzstan. Protected authorized snow leopard habitat in the 'Stans is hunting (the less than 5%.

government of On display at a large state-sponsored Tajikistan is sored celebration were the skins of even issuing snow leopards. In the Presidential licenses to yurt (tent), according to witnesses, hunt snow snow leopard skins covered the floor leopards) and and the walls.

rampant ISLT is striving to offer alternatives to the notion that a dead snow leopard is worth more than a live one.

1993-94 a Our efforts in this region will appear in the upcoming issue of Snow Line this winter.

snow leopard pelt was worth 60 times more than the minimum yearly wage

## Education in Action: Posters distributed in Mongolia & Bhutan

ISLT has now distributed the Web of Life poster in eight countries. Before the traditional Mongolian New Year, poster/calendars were circulated to herders and schools in snow leopard areas throughout Mongolia. This summer also saw Web of Life posters printed for the first time in Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan. With assistance from the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (ISLT's in-county partner), the posters were warmly received by WWF-Bhutan and members of the National Assembly. Targeting livestock herders with minimum education, the text roughly translates as -From the smallest seed of grass to the snow leopard, mountain plants and wildlife are interconnected:

The next phase includes a program of classroom games and activities centered on the poster and aimed at building visual comprehension of the interconnectedness of life, knowledge of the benefits of protected areas, and awareness that all stakeholders must work together and share responsibility for national parks and preserves.

# 5th SLIMS Workshop Held in Nepal

Shey-Phoksundo National Park was the most recent site of the Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) workshop. Rodney Jackson, ISLT's Conservation Director, and Joseph L. Fox, Department of Biology, University of Tromsø, Norway, conducted the workshop which was attended by 16 individuals from Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

*SLIMS participants learning how to transect snow leopard and prey sign in Shey phoksundo National Park this Spring.*

(DNPWC) and Nepalese conservation NGOs. The workshop covered topics ranging from field census techniques to a review of key issues affecting snow leopard conservation and management in Nepal. Outdoor classroom sessions' were supplemented by hands-on field exercises devoted to census techniques specific to Nepal. The nine-day training session was followed by a month-long survey of Shey-Phoksundo by select participants in order to determine the current status of snow leopards and other mammals in the area. The workshop was funded by a generous grant from the Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, and undertaken in partnership with WWF-Nepal and the DNPWC.

## Snow Leopard News

is published three times per year. Copyright 1999 by the International Snow Leopard Trust. Contact ISLT by e-mail: [islt@serv.net](mailto:islt@serv.net) Phone: 206-632-2421 . Fax: 206-632-3967 Website: [www.snowleopard.org](http://www.snowleopard.org)

## News & Notes

ISLT welcomes three new directors to its Board: Norma Cole, Harborview Medical Center, Thomas Ginn, PhD, Exponent Environment Group, and Robert Pennell, Appropriate Balance Financial Services.

Blank Park zoo of Des Moines, Iowa, has joined our Natural Partnerships Program for 1999, bringing the number of zoos to 19 in this program.

Dr. Rodney Jackson has been named Vice-Chair, Snow Leopards, of the Cat Specialist Group of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), based in Geneva. This position was recently vacated by Helen Freeman, founder of ISLT.

Be sure to put snow leopards on your holiday lists this year! The Nature Company and The Discovery Channel Store will be selling plush toy snow leopards in their US stores soon. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to ISLT.

If you are shopping on the web, be sure to stop by the [greatergood.com](http://greatergood.com) website, and you can go to ISLT's shopping village, which will ensure that ISLT will receive at least 5% of every purchase you make, at no cost to you.

ISIT welcomes new Founder's Circle members  
Gordon  
and Kaysea  
Ray,  
owners and  
co-captains  
of *The Snow  
Leopard*,  
pictured at  
right.

Excerpted from "The Snow Leopard Talking About its Life", an article by Bariushaa Munkhtsog that appeared in Baigal Magazine in Mongolia. Translation from Mongolian by B. Munkhtsog.

## Thoughts from a *Snow leopard*

Since the early nineties, the social structure of my country has changed from communism to democracy. The collective livestock was privatized and for these ten years the domestic livestock numbers have increased by ten million head of sheep, providing an increased income to shepherds.

People and livestock are occupying more and more pasture and water resources. My major prey species

leave home pastures to look for other grazing land. Sometimes hungry leopards are desperate and kill domestic livestock. In this case herders are so angry with us that they try to trap us on our trails, and smoke our females out of the dens where they have given birth to newborn cubs.

Mongolia's snow leopards number less than a thousand animals, one-fifth of the world's snow leopard

population. The world is looking at Mongolia to see what they are doing to conserve endangered snow leopards.

Since 1994, the Mongolian government has stopped licensed hunting of snow leopards, and has been building a protected areas network for snow leopards and our habitat. Today there are ten such protected areas.

In ancient times Mongolia had experienced hunters who killed just a few for their own needs. Modern "hunters" with jeeps and guns are shooting every animal they see. Local people need to take care of the wildlife of their homeland, for now and future benefit.

## snow Leopard Spot

WWF-Nepal duces the amount of food available and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Nepal), to ISLT, recently published stock. 3) Retaliatory Killing: snow Snow Leopard in Nepal, a booklet detailing snow leopard status, range and threats in Nepal, which ring true for the cat's entire range in Central Asia. The snow leopard faces five primary threats:

- 1) Poaching: The sale of bones and pelts offers poor opportunity to generate a substantial and easy income, and enforcement is often weak.
- 2) Loss of Habitat: Snow leopard habitat is inadequate and becoming increasingly fragmented.
- 3) Retaliatory Killing: Snow leopard are increasingly likely to hunt domestic livestock together with other prey species.
- 4) Loss of Prey: Snow leopard are becoming increasingly isolated and easy prey.
- 5) Lack of Awareness: Villagers, whose livelihood depends on

animal husbandry, see no advantage to co-existing with snow leopards, and protection efforts are undermined by weak laws and ill-equipped and poorly trained staff.

The publishing of Snow Leopard in Nepal and ongoing SLIMS workshops (see page 2) are vital components of collaborative conservation efforts to combat these threats in Nepal and other snow leopard countries.